

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SCS-01 SCA-01 L-02 INR-11 SY-02

NSCE-00 NSC-07 SSO-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DRC-01 RSC-01

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O 051945Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5889

INFO AMCONSUL RECIFE NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 7622

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, BR, CPRS (MORRIS, FREDERICK B.)

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ON AMCIT MORRIS CASE

REF: A. BRASILIA 7616; B. BRASILIA 7614; C. BRASILIA 7549;

D. BRASILIA 7617

SUMMARY: FOR SUMMARY OF THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA AND AMBASSADOR CRIMMINS, SEE REFTEL D WHICH TRANSMITTED HIGHLIGHTS OF THAT CONVERSATION.

1. THE AMBASSADOR CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA ON EVENING OF OCTOBER 4 TO PRESENT DIPLOMATIC NOTE TRANSMITTED REFTEL A. AFTER READING THE NOTE, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT THE MINISTER OF THE ARMY HAD INFORMED HIM THAT MORRIS HAD JUMPED FROM A WINDOW AT THE TIME OF HIS ARREST AND HAD FALLEN. IT WAS TRUE THAT HE WAS BRUISED. THE ARMY MINISTER HAD RECOMMENDED THAT MORRIS RECEIVE THE BEST POSSIBLE TREATMENT. AS FAR AS MORRIS' ACTIVITIES WERE CONCERNED, SILVEIRA SAID, THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THEY WERE SUBVERSIVE. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT HE WAS NOT ADDRESSING THE MERITS OF THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MORRIS. HE SAID THAT OUR CONCERN DEALT WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DETENTION, INCLUDING
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MORRIS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CONDITION, AS WELL AS THE

IMPROPER AND INADMISSIBLE REFUSAL OF THE AUTHORITIES TO ADMIT HE WAS IN CUSTODY AND THEIR REFUSAL TO PROVIDE ACCESS. THESE WERE GRAVE CONCERNS.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA STATED THAT AS FAR AS HUMANE TREATMENT WAS CONCERNED, WE HAD THE WORD OF THE ARMY MINISTER. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED WHETHER HE COULD INTERPRET THAT STATEMENT AS ASSURANCE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED, "OF COURSE." CONCERNING ACCESS, THE FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT HE HAD NOT KNOWN ACCESS WAS BEING DENIED. HE HAD BEEN UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT HIS ORIGINAL CALL TO THE ARMY MINISTER HAD SETTLED THE ISSUE, AND HE WOULD TAKE CARE OF THIS.

3. THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT WITH REGARD TO A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OF MORRIS AND ANY REQUIRED TREATMENT, IT WAS HIS STRONG REQUEST THAT BRAZILIAN DOCTOR DESIGNATED BY HIM MAKE THE EXAMINATION AND THAT THE EMBASSY'S FOREIGN SERVICE DOCTOR ACCOMPANY THE BRAZILIAN DOCTOR AS AN OBSERVER. HE WAS PROPOSING THIS ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL INTEREST IN CLARIFYING THE FACTS. THE AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT HE HAD TAKEN NOTE OF THE STATEMENT OF THE ARMY MINISTER AS TRANSMITTED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT, IN THE COURSE OF THE ARREST, MORRIS HAD LEAPED FROM A WINDOW AND HAD INJURED HIMSELF. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT THE ARMY MINISTER WAS AN HONEST MAN, BUT, OF COURSE, HE HAD BASED HIS STATEMENT ON INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM RECIFE.

4. THE FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT THE AMERICAN CONSUL IN RECIFE HAD BEEN NERVOUS, RATHER EXCITED AND HAD NOT BEEN CALM WHEN HE MET WITH MORRIS AND THAT THIS MIGHT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO ANY MISUNDERSTANDING. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT HE HAD KNOWN CONSUL BROWN FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AND HAD FULL CONFIDENCE IN HIM. SILVEIRA SAID THAT HE TOOK NOTE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT. THE AMBASSADOR RAISED THE POINT OF THE MISLEADING STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE WHEREABOUTS OF MORRIS BY COL MEZIAT, CHIEF OF G-2 OF THE FOURTH ARMY, AND SILVEIRA SAID THAT HE WAS NOT SURE THAT MEZIAT HAD KNOWN OF THE ARREST AT THE TIME OF THE AMERICAN CONSUL'S APPROACH. MORRIS HAD BEEN ARRESTED BY THE POLICE AND NOT BY THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES, HE SAID. THE AMBASSADOR MADE THE POINT THAT THE CONSUL HAD MADE INQUIRY OF THE STATE, FEDERAL AND MILITARY SECURITY AUTHORITIES ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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1ST OF OCTOBER AND THAT, ACCORDING TO THE CONSUL, MEZIAT HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MORRIS HAD BEEN ARRESTED BY FOURTH ARMY PERSONNEL UNDER HIS SUPERVISION. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MORRIS HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONVERSATIONS IN THE RECENT PAST BETWEEN OFFICERS OF THE CONSULATE AND COL. MEZIAT AS WELL AS OTHER AUTHORITIES. THEY HAD BEEN FULLY AWARE OF OUR INTEREST IN THE CASE.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA STATED THAT MORRIS HAD SAID HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE CIA AND THIS HAD BEEN TAKEN AT FACE VALUE FOR A TIME. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT THE SNI HAD INQUIRED OF THE EMBASSY WHETHER THIS WAS THE CASE, AND THEY HAD BEEN INFORMED CATEGORICALLY THAT MORRIS HAD NO CONNECTION WITH ANY OF OUR SERVICES. THE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT COL. MEZIAT HAD MADE A NUMBER OF STATEMENTS TO THE CONSUL (REFTEL B) THAT HE FOUND OFFENSIVE BOTH TO THE CONSUL AND TO THE U.S.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRASILIA 7622

LIMDIS

THE AMBASSADOR ALSO READ TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER THE CONSUL'S ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH MORRIS WHICH HAD BEEN HELD IN THE PRESENCE OF COL. CORREA (REFTEL C) AND POINTED OUT THAT THE CONSUL'S OBSERVATIONS TENDED TO CORROBORATE MORRIS' STATEMENTS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDED THAT GEN. FROTA, THE ARMY MINISTER WAS EXTREME IN DEMANDING GOOD TREATMENT FOR PRISONERS AND THAT HE WOULD BRING THIS REPORT TO FROTA'S ATTENTION. HE BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT MORRIS WOULD BE BOUND TO SAY SOMETHING

ALONG THE LINES OF WHAT THE CONSUL HAD RECORDED AND IT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE TRUE. FOR INSTANCE, IT WAS RIDICULOUS TO CONSIDER THAT DOM HELDER CAMARA WAS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT HE WAS FULLY AWARE OF THE OPINION OF MANY MILITARY OFFICERS WITH REGARD TO DOM HELDER'S ACTIVITIES AND, IN THAT CONTEXT, MORRIS'

STATEMENT DID NOT SEEM UNUSUAL. SILVEIRA SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE ISSUE SHOULD BE PREJUDGED. EVEN IF THERE WERE SOME MILITARY OFFICERS WHO HAD CERTAIN OPINIONS ON DOM HELDER, THE FACT WAS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT ACTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOSE VIEWS. DOM HELDER DID WHATEVER HE WISHED TO DO.

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT THE AMBASSADOR KNEW HIM WELL. HE KNOW WHAT HE, THE MINISTER, STOOD FOR. HE WOULD APPROACH
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THE PROBLEM WITH A VERY COOL HEAD. HE HAD TO BE FIRM AND MOVE WITH AUTHORITY TO REINFORCE HIS POSITION IN APPROACHING THIS PROBLEM. HE WOULD TRY TO DO EVERYTHING THE AMBASSADOR REALLY WANTED HIM TO DO. HE DID NOT HAVE TO BE IMPRESSED WITH THE FACTS OF THE CASE NOR TO BE CONFINCED OF ITS MERITS BECAUSE HE WOULD TRY TO HELP US IN ANY CASE.

7. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE RECIFE NEWSPAPERS HAD CARRIED THE STORY THAT AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, IDENTIFIED BY NAME, HAD BEEN ARRESTED ON SUBVERSIVE CHARGES AND SAID THAT HE WOULD BE GLAD TO LEAVE COPIES OF THE STORIES WITH THE MINISTER. AP AND TIME HAD INQUIRED ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND HAD ASKED WHAT WAS BEING DONE. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT WE HAD GIVEN THE FACTS AS WE KNEW THEM THIS WAS INEVITABLE AND, UNFORTUNATELY, IT WAS GOING TO BE AN ISSUE. AT THIS MOMENT IN THE CONVERSATION, THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S PRESS SECRETARY ARRIVED WITH A PAPER AND, AFTER READING IT, SILVEIRA STATED THAT THE NEWS AGENCIES WERE SENDING NEWS ABROAD THAT MORRIS HAD BEEN JAILED AND MISTREATED BY BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES. HE SAID THAT AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR AUTHORITIES IN BRAZIL WERE LISTED AS THE SOURCE OF THE STORY. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT, WHILE THE AMBASSADOR WAS FREE TO DO WHATEVER HE WISHED, IT WAS A GREAT PITY THAT THIS NEWS WAS OUT. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO BE SURE OF THE FACTS SINCE THEY WERE BASED ONLY ON MORRIS' TESTIMONY AND MORRIS COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO SAY THAT HE HAD BEEN MISTREATED. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT THERE WAS THE QUESTION OF THE BRUISES ON MORRIS' BACK AND THE FACT THAT HIS WRISTS WERE LACERATED. HE DID NOT HAVE AN OPTION IN THIS MATTER. HE COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT MISLEAD THE AMERICAN PRESS OR ANY OTHER PRESS. IN ADDITION, HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN WAS OVER-RIDING REGARDLESS OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM.

8. THE FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT, IN A CERTAIN SENSE, THE AMBASSADOR HAD MADE A JUDGMENT ON THE ISSUES AND IT HAD BEEN PRINTED, WHICH WAS NOT GOING TO MAKE THE RESOLUTION OF THE CASE ANY EASIER. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT HE REGRETTED THE ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS WHICH HAD MADE THIS NECESSARY AND THAT THE DELIVERY OF THE NOTE AND THIS DISCUSSION WAS ONE OF THE MOST DISAGREEABLE TASKS HE HAD EVER FACED. HE HAD, HE HOPED, REASON AND RIGHT TO EXPECT A VERY PROMPT ANSWER. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT HE WOULD

DO WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS RIGHT AND THAT HE WOULD INQUIRE AS
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DEEPLY AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO GET AT THE TRUTH, BUT THAT HE WAS NOT A JUDGE, ONLY A FOREIGN MINISTER JUST AS HE, THE AMBASSADOR, WAS ONLY AN AMBASSADOR. THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT THEY BOTH UNDERSTOOD THE POTENTIAL AND THE POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CASE, AND HE VERY MUCH REGRETTED THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HAD BEEN CREATED THAT HAD GIVEN RISE TO THESE POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS. HE HOPED THAT THE SITUATION COULD BE ATTENUATED. HE WOULD KEEP IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH ON THIS ISSUE SINCE IT WAS A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO HIM AND WASHINGTON. THE AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT HE HAD GIVEN SOME THOUGHT TO BREAKING THE LOGJAM ON ACCESS BY GOING HIMSELF TO RECIFE AND ASKING PERMISSION FROM THE AUTHORITIES TO SEE MORRIS. THIS WAS AN EXTREME STEP HE DID NOT WISH TO TAKE. HE WOULD MUCH PREFER FOR THS CONSUL TO HAVE ACCESS TO MORRIS. HE WOULD HAVE TO GIVE THIS CONSIDERATION SOME THOUGHT.

9. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SITTING IN HIS MINISTERIAL CHAIR IF HE WERE AFRAID OF ANYTHING. PERHAPS THINGS HAPPENED WHICH CREATED THE WRONG ATMOSPHERE, BUT THIS DID NOT REFLECT THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT. HE NOTED THAT DURING HIS STAY IN NEW YORK FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HE HAD READ THAT TWO MEN WERE KILLED BY MISTAKE BECAUSE IT WAS THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE BLACK SUBVERSIVES. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO GENERALIZE IN THESE SITUATIONS, HE SAID. IT WAS NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH THE CASES AS THEY AROSE. HE MUST HAVE THE FACTS OF THE MORRIS CASE AND HE WAS NOT ENTITLED TO JUMP TO ANY CONCLUSIONS. IN ANY EVENT, HE COULD NOT BECOME EMOTIONAL. THE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS NOT ASKING FOR A DETERMINATION OF THE CHARGES AGAINST MORRIS. HE WAS ASKING FOR ASSURANCES OF HUMANE TREATMENT, WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD GIVEN HIM. HE WAS ASKING FOR DAILY ACCESS AND A MEDICAL EXAMINATION. THESE POINTS WERE ENTIRELY LEGITIMATE AND WERE CONDUCIVE TO ATTENUATING THE ISSUE AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE AN ATTENUATION OF THE ISSUE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT, IN TRUTH, HE DID NOT THINK WE WERE GOING TO ATTENUATE ANYTHING, BUT HE WOULD NOT PERMIT HIMSELF TO BE INFLUENCED BY THAT THOUGHT. HE WAS GOING TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO SATISFY THE AMBASSADOR. HE THOUGHT THE HARM HAD ALREADY BEEN DONE. THE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT THE HARM HAD BEEN DONE BY THE IMPROPER PROCEDURES FOLLOWED IN THE CASE, AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDED THAT THIS HAD BEEN EMPHASIZED IN THE NEWS STORIES.

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Message Attributes

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